

portion of the control program 360 without undue experimentation using conventional computer programming techniques.

In addition to the conventional portion providing for conventional operational functionality, the control program 360 comprises a return-to-owner security lockout portion that essentially implements the method 100 according to the invention. Advantageously, such a return-to-owner security lockout portion of the control program 360 may be implemented as a firmware upgrade to existing digital camera 300 firmware. Using the buttons 342 and the image display 344 of the user interface 340, the owner can input owner information upon receiving prompts from the computer program 360 to do so. Alternatively, the owner information can be uploaded from an external source such as a personal computer using an I/O port or interface provided by the digital camera 300 (not illustrated). This owner information is entered into, and is stored in and accessed from, the memory 330 only if a valid security lockout bypass has enabled the device.

Figures 6A and 6B illustrate an examples of the owner information displays. As illustrated in Figure 6A, the owner information comprises an owner name and contact information, such as the owner's address and/or telephone number. Figure 6B illustrates a display comprising lost and found service contact information. Both Figures 6A and 6B include an example of a message to a user indicating why the device is disabled. The type and quantity of information displayed during security lockout are not intended to limit the scope of the invention in any way. Any information that will directly or indirectly relate the electronic device to its rightful owner is within the scope of the present invention.

Thus, there have been described a novel method 100 of return-to-owner security lockout and an electronic device 200, 300 having return-to-owner security lockout. It should be understood that the above-described embodiments are merely illustrative of the some of the many specific embodiments that represent the principles of the present invention. Clearly, those skilled in the art can readily devise numerous other arrangements without departing from the scope of the present invention as defined by the following claims.